

Central Florida Meeting Notes
February 19 and 20, 2003

Introduction and Meeting Overview:

Affects large area of population; take time to take best approach. Has not been publicized yet; no pressure from community, etc. to take action. No time pressure. Take time to come up with best approach. Open discussion; looking for ideas. Address concerns; different perspectives. By end of tomorrow, have outline of major activities to cover. Suzanne and Mary will take this back, and develop community involvement strategy. Proceed carefully; we tend to be problem-solvers. Be open to various possibilities. We have time on our side.

Kara Bell – EPA
Dawn Harris – EPA
Carol Monell - EPA
Brad Jackson – EPA RPM
Brenda Woods - EPA
Caroline Robinson - EPA
LaTonya Spencer – EPA
Sonya Pennock – EPA - Region 8
Suzanne Zoda – Khafra/Black & Veatch Mentor Protégé Firm
Nestor Young – EPA
Mary Wenska – Black & Veatch
Karen Hopkins – Black & Veatch
Mary Harlin - Work Systems Associates - Facilitator
Paul Plotczyk – Work Systems Associates – Facilitator
Jim McGuire – EPA
Todd Trulock – COE
Becky Hendrix - EPA

11:30 – Lunchtime
4:00 – Adjourn for day

What needs to happen for all of us to open up and discuss? What might block us from openness?

Start with a question.

Talk about it from a perspective of not just science – look at all perspectives.

Preconceived ideas. These keep us from listening or discovering.

Imposition of ideas/experience.

Being “wrong” or being “right”.

If we go directly from a problem to a solution, we block the discovery of ideas.



10765222

We miss the discovery process. How do we stay in "discovery" mode, and not try so hard to get to the solution too quickly.

The politics gets in the way of the "discovery" process, blocking new ideas. Gets in way of possibilities.

Part of proving yourself is giving yourself permission to be wrong. Being wrong allows you to set up a process to consider the variables. It helps us to be more flexible, adaptable.

We are here to develop an initial strategy but without having an idea of people's feelings in community. We usually find out about people's feelings in community first. We can't be sure of our ideas until we actually get out into the community. Large area; may find different attitudes in different areas of the Central Florida area.

Draft Agenda

Introductions and Meeting Overview

Expectations of Participants

Strategy (come up with 2 to 4 strategies)

Project Issues for Consideration

Initial Strategy(s)

Identifying Potential Breakdowns/De-railers

Strategy and Implementation

Close Out and Next Steps

Expectations:

What has to occur to make this a success at the end of these meetings?

How do you approach this, given that it's such a large area. Come up with some new, creative ways to cover such a large area.

Avoiding preconceived notions.

Understand the makeup of the stakeholders all these areas.

What do we really know already about this area? What do we think we still don't know about the area? What do we think we know? (Avoiding preconceptions, but what does experience tell us might be the case).

What are they going to see?

What do we want the final outcome of communications to look like?

How can we proactively communicate with the media and with all the stakeholders?
How do you meet the needs of all the stakeholders – information and input?

Investigate agenda within the community. Our information could potentially be spun the wrong way; how to get message out.

Slow down technical work so we can bring these communities along.

Political agendas

- Know districts
- Know that "leaks" may occur and what areas and plan to address.
- Have "What if's

Agreements on how to communicate internally.

What/who is "internal"? Decide who needs to be in the loop.

Make state of Florida part of the decision-making process. Be sensitive to state (Florida) and make sure they are involved; make sure they feel like they are part of the team.

Know how to incorporate community concerns and political people.

Plan for dealing with the media.

Outside forces that might have a serious impact on the project. (Stauffer – Tarpon Springs, Manatee County). This will be an impact on other projects. Person who has "whistle-blower" status --- cannot be interfered with. Very critical of EPA. Stauffer community has close ties with officials in this community. Once people start organizing, Stauffer community with negative bias could impact this project. This is a challenge to the project.

Polk County media is EPA-friendly; but other areas are not (Tampa/St. Petersburg). Lakeland Ledger Newspaper – Polk County.

Issues:

What are the issues/concerns about this project?

The Community

1. How does it affect us? How will it affect our children? What is the message; how do we explain what we are there for?
2. Mission/goal of initiative.
3. Economic impact on community.
4. Fear of the unknown; uncertainty.
5. How to communicate without undue alarm.
6. Expectations that we'll do something.
7. Who is the audience? Who is the community? Mayor; phosphate guys; politicians.
8. Who is on the phosphate council?

9. Who are the stakeholders?

Stakeholders:

- Phosphate council and industry
- Property owners
- State of Florida – Counties (Polk, Hillsborough, DeSoto, etc.)
- Developers – all levels
- Political leadership
- Health Dept. – local, federal, state
- Media
- Environmental groups
- Local business community
- Downstream water users
- Public school system
- Medical community
- Tribal lands
- Recreation industry
- PRP's (potential responsible parties)
- Parents of university students
- EJ interests

Scope:

Most concerned with older mines, prior to 1975. Mined phosphate pebbles, found deposits in ground, expanding their mining of these areas. Technology wasn't as good; ore left in mines. Not closed properly.

Main contaminant: Radium (when ore is brought out and refined, water & soil has radium left in it). The non-mandatory mines (hatched areas) have largest potential for contamination. About 150,000 acres of mines, as much as 25,000 acres of which have been developed into residential areas. Residential areas important because people would have most exposure to radiation.

Approach:

High levels of radiation, based on some measurements already taken in one of these areas. 100 measurements made --- all exceeded threshold. 10% of measurements exceeded highest threshold.

Let's see how bad the problem is. Then, regroup and see where we go from there.

Proposal: Go in and survey the entire area (by helicopter) – at 500 feet. Make one pass, turn around and go back. Did this in Pocatella, Idaho; Indian reservation in area, roughly the same size. They mapped the entire area. This would help to understand the nature of the area. Then, we would be able to tell them what they had been exposed to. Have contour maps of elevated levels (hot spots). This technology is extremely accurate, depending on how high up we would fly. Fly 500 feet off the ground, back and forth, 500 feet apart. One or two helicopters at a time. It would take about 6 weeks to complete the project. (The area is 2,800 square miles). We could then see if it was due to some other source. Then, apply three different criteria. 15 – 100 – 500. Determine actions to be taken. Treat it as research of the area.

Proposed Actions:

1. Community involvement strategy – communicate plan to public.
2. Perform technical (aerial) survey.
3. Report
4. Decision process. (from EPA)

EPA can fund up to where problems are identified. Then, try to find potential responsible parties. Who is accountable? Might have to obtain funds from state.

(People don't resist change; they resist the imposition of change.) On step 1, it might be really important to communicate closely with stakeholders before any action is taken. Also, to involve the Phosphate Council to help fund the data research. The fly-over mapping must be considered as part of the community relations approach. (Helicopter will be flying at 80 mph). In this situation, most of the people in the area don't know there is a problem (unlike most typical Superfund site situations). Look at accountabilities in the area.

Possible date for doing the aerial mapping: After the hurricane season. It will take spring and summer to complete community relations strategy. After public meetings, there will be some pressure to continue.

Initial Focus of Strategy:

1. Go into community.
2. Tailor information to each group; tailor what we say & to whom. (see list of groups above).
3. Get input.

Superfund approach:

Go and talk to people who have some idea that the problem exists. What do they know, have them tell us what the best ways are to establish dialogue with community; what works for you? Do interviews, take notes, then write community involvement plan.

(Lay out the potential problems. Say that this is similar to what we did in another area (Idaho) --- same sort of approach.

What did the study in Idaho yield? Successful, in that it showed where the problem areas are. Bad in that you know that you are in a contaminated area. Navaho study identified other areas that needed more study; became a funding issue.

Demographics: Retirement communities – long-term residents; newer people have moved in. The older residents probably know about phosphate mining, but the newer residents don't.

Suggestion: A small pilot project in only one area. Problem with that is costs involved; could do study on a small area, but would have to hold the information until all was completed. Once the word gets out, we will have to implement the study. People might say "why them and not us"?

Suggestions:

- 1) Meet with Florida EPA officials. Let them know the EPA is going to do a technical survey of the area to determine potential radiation problems. (Do technical survey of whole area at once).
- 2) Then, meet with local elected government officials. Ask county representatives from each of the 5 counties to meet with us first, and give us their input about how best to communicate with their constituents. Go to them county-by-county, because of different dynamics in each county. Go by means of the County Commission.

After that, go to the federal and state representatives. Make sure we answer their questions, and ask for their input about how to communicate with their constituents.

- 3) Have meetings, get feedback.
- 4) Then, meet with public.

Mission Statement:

"EPA is conducting an aerial survey of the phosphate mining region in the 6 – county (name them) area to evaluate the naturally-occurring radiation levels and to evaluate the potential for changes in radiation levels resulting from mining activities."

Next: How: Using low-flying helicopter. (500 feet over)

How long will it take?

When the results are ready, we will.....

Authority?

Time frame: Process – after study, then what?

5) Have a Public Availability (information) Session after this is done, along with video about phosphates.

“Enrollment” conversations – Involve people in the decision-making process, so that the dialogue is a useful, two-way dialogue.

It’s important how we “package” this information. Try to build a case for the technical survey, so that they will want to let the public officials come in and do this.

Don’t let the public feel that this is being done to them. Let them be a part of the decision-making process.

6) Finally, have an ongoing Community Involvement Group.

Communications Approach:

2-pronged strategy--

- 1) Short-term (related to survey only) – Coming into the area to do a survey.
- 2) Long-term

Priority of Group Meetings:

1. EPA Regional Management – Chief of Staff 2/24/03
2. Florida DEP – Senior Managers 3/5/03
3. Regional Admin. – Jimmy Palmer
Re: Decision of overall approach

(Take a general plan to all 3 of these meetings)

Elected Officials:

1. Federal – EPA
2. State – EPA Support DEP
3. Industry – Minimum time between briefings of groups
4. Local – EPA & DEP

(“Sunshine Law” – Open meeting to all. The press and the public can be at all meetings)

The state of Florida could “kill” the issue at the March 5 meeting. Congress has the authority to stop this, and the people have the authority to challenge Congress.

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY OUTLINE

		<u>Fed./State/Local Elected Officials</u>	
<u>EPA Management</u>		<u>Public</u>	<u>Press</u>
	<u>Communicate</u>		
<u>State Management</u>		<u>Industry</u>	

Have guidelines that are always consistent in your communication with each group. Always be clear and give as much information as possible; take into account their rationale; their authority; their specific needs.

The other part is the relationship with these people. I'm supporting you.

Determine: What are the elements that will be in each communication?

Elected Officials:

Who: U.S. Congressmen and Senators – Becky's office
State Reps and Senators - DEP
County Commissioners - Team
Municipalities - Team

Activities:

(1-week time frame)

- Desk Statement
- Educational briefing to County Commissioners (find out from state)
More informal.
- Information Sheet (different from Superfund sheets).
- EPA (Palmer) will brief federal elected officials and support the state representatives and senators.
- County.
- Municipalities after. (key)

Industry

Who communicates: Ask RA and at what level. We suggest EPA and state.

- Florida Phosphate Council
- Individual companies

Activities:

- Engage with them immediately after briefing with U.S. Congressmen and Senators.
- Information Sheet – Give the same one to industry as to Congressmen.
- Solicit involvement from phosphate industry and get help from them regarding funding.
- Can we do a partnership with industry, DOE, university, etc. (FIPR).

Region 8 – Experiences/Lessons Learned

1. Best planning can't make up for poor decisions. Be willing to go back and examine your management and technical decisions. All the community involvement in the world won't make up for that.
2. Try to keep it simple on the radiation measurements, so that the public understands.
3. Substances – Demystify the substances. Lay the groundwork with the public; help them to see that this is something that exists naturally in their soil. It won't blow up!
4. Don't expect trust. Try to provide opportunities for us to be accountable to them. Peer review; community advisory group; etc. Do all things in clear light of day.
5. Share the problem with the public; it's our problem as well as their problem. Don't let public feel that they have no say; give them input into choices wherever possible.
6. Keep your promises and commitments.
7. Don't raise an expectation if you don't think you can deliver on it.
8. Importance of PM and Community Relations Mgr. getting to know people involved. Don't stay aloof from community; build relationships. Be accessible; answer their questions when they want them answered. Care! Don't stonewall.
9. Never mislead them.
10. Buck stops with you. When things get ugly – you're alone. Keep distance with PRP.
11. Respect their intelligence – don't appear paternalistic.
12. Remember that we have lots of flexibility in what we do.

Change Theory:

Deal with saboteurs (trouble-makers).

Support the champions.

Give voice to the silent majority – the great middle.

(Give them something to do --- make them part of a team).

Public Activities:

Ask: What would you think?

- Create advisory board to report – by county.
- Have press release ready
- Activities such as:
 - Public advisory meeting
 - Field office
 - Hot line
 - Repository
 - Website
 - Newsletter
 - Video of helicopter
 - Press availability meeting
 - Store front office with circuit rider
 - Establish technical review committee

TIME LINE:

1. Chief of Staff Meeting – 2/24
2. State Meeting - 3/5
3. (Conference Call Meeting – tentatively 3/11, 3:00 P.M.)
4. Community Draft Strategy Submittal
5. Community Outreach
6. Fly-Over Start
7. Report Survey Results

ACCOUNTABILITIES:

E-mail:

LaTonya
Brad
Dawn
Kara
Mary
Suzanne

Possibility of getting another CIC and PM involved.
(More than one person working on project at EPA, so the one person won't get burnt out).

Look at who has authority to call meetings (EPA/B&V); how will regular meetings be held? If you don't, you miss opportunity to bring out ideas, form relationships, etc.

Some of these meetings may be conference calls.

Establish guidelines for ongoing formal meetings. It allows you to bring in other information, and identify other issues as they arise.

March 11 – Conference Call

When dealing with community, don't inundate them with details.

Have some Communication Guidelines as part of the community involvement plan.